THE FALASHAS OF ABYSSINIA

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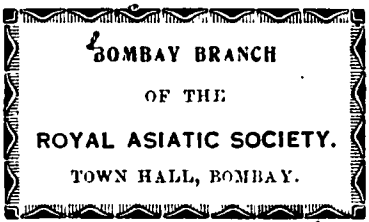

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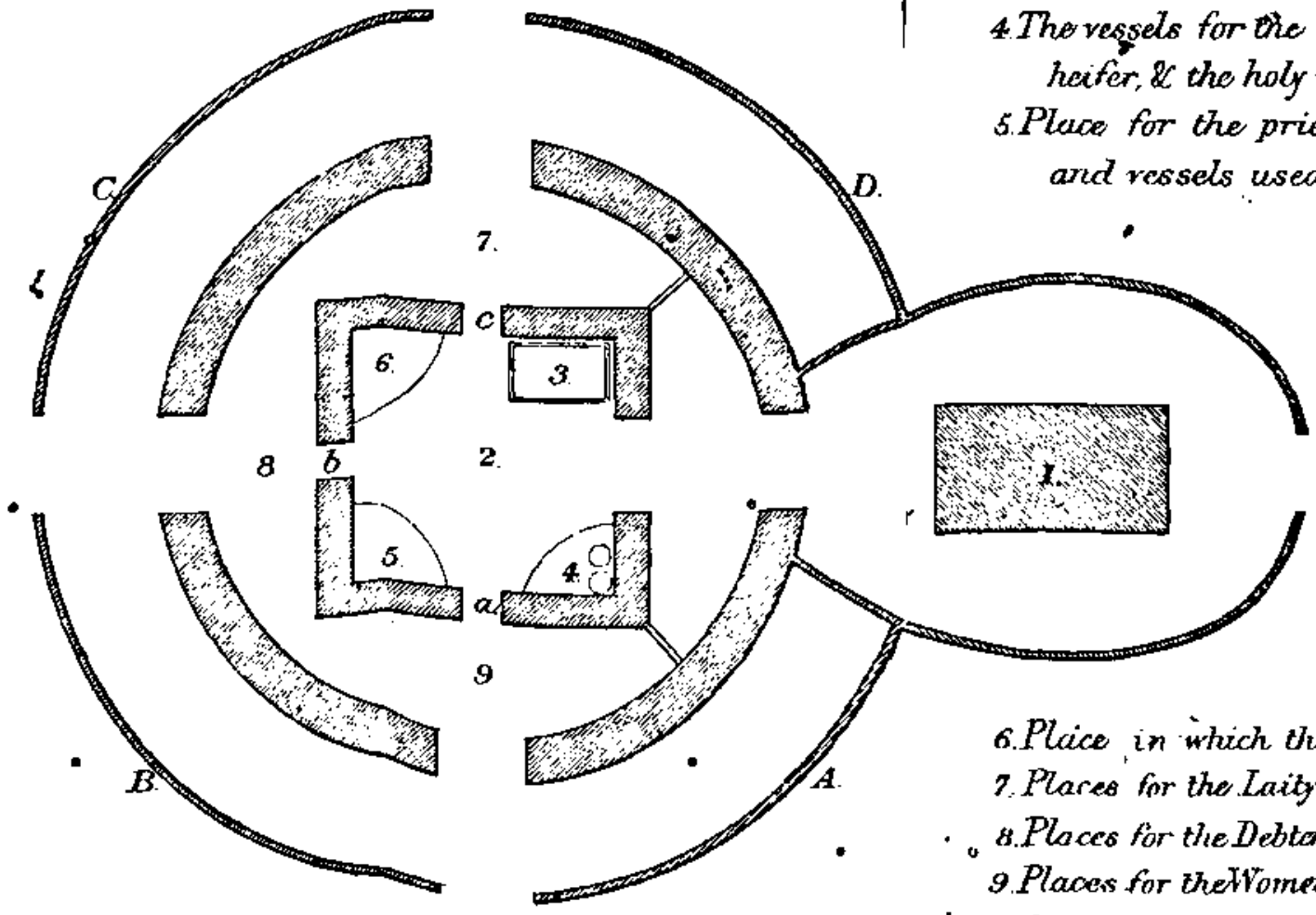

REFERENCE.

1. *Altar of Sacrifice.*
2. *The Holy of Holies.*
3. *The table on which lies the Orit*
4. *The vessels for the ashes of a red heifer, & the holy water.*
5. *Place for the priestly vestments and vessels used in the services.*
6. *Place in which the books are kept.*
7. *Places for the Laity.*
8. *Places for the Debtara.*
9. *Places for the Women.*

a.b.c Openings for windows.

A.B.C.D. Enclosure round the Mesgeed and the Court of Sacrifice.

THE FALASHAS

(JEWS)

OF ABYSSINIA.

58720

BY

J. M. FLAD.

WITH A PREFACE BY DR. KRAPF.

TRANSLATED FROM THE GERMAN,

By S. P. GOODHART.

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1869.

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PREFACE.

THE author of this little book on the Falashas, who accompanied me on my journey to Abyssinia in 1855, has expressed a wish that I should write a few words by way of introduction. I comply the more readily with this request, because since 1837, when I first crossed the Abyssinian frontier, it has been my earnest desire that some detailed account should be written of the Jews in that country, Bishop Gobat having given a brief notice of them in his diary. This desire is now fulfilled by my dear friend, Mr. Flad, missionary of the London Jews' Society; and though the subject would admit of much further detail, there is yet enough to give a correct impression of Jewish life in Abyssinia. This has hitherto been wanting, from the fact that missionaries and travellers have had little or no opportunity of intercourse with the Falashas, whereas Flad, with the missionaries Kaiger and Brandeis, who came with him from St. Chrischona, near Basle, but are now employed by the Scottish Jews' Society, has lived amongst them for a long time, and carried on missionary work especially on their behalf. Flad was stationed in

the Jewish village of Dschenda, Brandeis an Staiger in Darna, in the neighbourhood of the Zan Lake, not far from Gondar.

These Abyssinian Jews have many claims upo our interest. First, through historical antiquity dating from the time of the Babylonish captivity; secondly, because there is a marked difference be tween them and all other Jews; thirdly, becaus of their isolated geographical position in the mids of Christians, Mahommedans, and the heathen central Africa.

Mr. Flad's description of the Falashas in north west Abyssinia, confirmed me in the idea that th so-called Tabiban (wise men, or artificers) i Schoa, whom I found in a passing visit, May 1840, in the cloister of Mantek, two hours fro Ankobar, at the foot of the high mountain Masura are Jews also. (See my "Travels in East Africa," vol. i., p. 216.) The Abelam, or herdsmen of th royal cattle, who are scattered throughout th

* It is very probable that the Jewish settlements in Aby sinia date from the time of Solomon. This wise, liber and cosmopolitan monarch, as we learn from 1 Kings x. 2 sent his ships to Eastern Africa and India. His friendsh with the Queen of Sheba, if it did not, as the Abyssinia affirm, result in a closer connection, doubtless disposed h to further the interests of Jewish commerce on both sides the Red Sea, and political motives would lead him to k up friendly communication with the countries that around its shores. Whence could he have obtained bet ivory and finer apes than from Abyssinia, where elepha and the beautiful Guresa apes are found in abundance?

kingdom of Schoa, appear to have some connection with the Tabiban; they are also Jews, though in a very low and degenerate condition. Further, it is evident that in southern Abyssinia, among the wild Galla tribe, there are traces of a Jewish remnant, who, like the Christian remnant certainly existing in Gurague, Kambat, Wolamo, Susa, Kaffa, &c., have been cut off from Abyssinia through the incursions of the Gallas, among whom the Jews bear the name of Faki; these have maintained their independence owing to the difficulty of the mountain passes which surround them.

In these scattered traces of the Jews in East Africa, as in their dispersion throughout the whole world, we see the wonderful leadings of God's providence for the future blessing, not of the Jews only, but also of all other nations on the face of the earth. We know that from the time of the Judges, when many Jews were either sold as prisoners, or thrown by circumstances amongst the Gentiles, they carried with them a blessing. (Ruth i. 15, 16; 2 Kings v. 2.) The Babylonian captivity was still more the means of bringing many Gentiles to a better acquaintance with the ways of God. In the time of the apostles the dispersed Jewish colonies were stations or halting-places on their journeys, as we find St. Paul everywhere first visiting the Jewish synagogue. In the same manner they now serve as centres for the Christian missionary.

But all this is little in comparison with the

importance which these isolated Jewish settlemen
will acquire in the last days, when the prophecy i
Zech. xii. 10 shall be fulfilled, and the spirit
grace and of supplication be poured upon th
house of Israel. Then will those mines be sprun
which the Lord has as it were laid in readines
and spiritual life and light shall go forth fro
each missionary centre, to enlighten the whol
earth and usher in the millennial kingdom of glor
Then shall begin the third dispensation of Divin
mercy. As in the Old Testament dispensation th
grace of the Father paved the way for salvatio
so by the love of the Son was that plan of salva
tion carried out and accomplished; and when th
Holy Spirit shall bring the great work to bear upo
the hearts of all nations He will doubtless emplo
as His chief instruments the converted members o
the house of Israel. They shall go forth as mis
sionaries to all people, to break down the strong
holds of Satan, not with carnal weapons, but wit
the power of the Gospel and the Spirit from o
high. The dispersed Jewish remnant, especiall
throughout Christendom, will indeed be stirred u
before that time by the prince of this world to o
pose and reject the Messiah of the New Testamen
partly by obstinate superstition, partly by pe
sistent infidelity, and to this end they will uni
with the apostate Christians, as did the Jews
old, in the time of the Maccabees, under the O
Testament Antichrist Antiochus. But this unio
will be of short duration, because the Antichri

ill require them to merge their nationality in
hat of the apostate Gentiles. When they refuse
his demand they will be subject to the same bitter
ersecution that will overtake the faithful among
he Christians, and this will drive them back to the
and of their fathers, but only to be further puri-
ied in the fire of tribulation, for the beast and the
alse prophet shall at length make Palestine their
ead-quarters, and there rage most furiously against
ll who oppose them. During this time of tribula-
ion the two great witnesses (Revelation xi.) will
lo signs and wonders, partly among the faithful
Christians, (of whom there will be many in Pa-
estine, most however in the region of the Caspian
Sea,) strengthening and protecting them, and
partly among the unbelieving Jews, setting forth
Christ as the true Messiah, by which means many
will believe the testimony and be saved. The
greater number, however, will only believe on Him
when He appears to destroy the Antichristian host
at the battle of Armageddon, and His visible mani-
festation will be the signal for the conversion of
the whole Jewish people. They shall then look on
Him whom they have pierced (Zech. xii. 11) and
say, "Blessed is He that cometh in the name of the
Lord." (Matt. xxiii. 39.)

By their conversion and reinstatement in their
privileges God will thus make His people capable,
together with those found faithful among the
Christians, of preaching repentance and remission of
sins in the name of Jesus throughout all nations,

beginning at Jerusalem. Their government an constitution will then be framed in exact accordanc with the pattern given in the Word of God, an serve as an example to all people. They will the no longer be expressly distinct from other nations nor will they tyrannize over them, but they wil strive, in the love of Christ and in true humility to use the gifts bestowed upon them by God fo the service and welfare of all. Then will be th universal reign of peace, when Christ, the true King David, shall have His throne in Jerusalem.

In the meantime it is the duty of Christian missionaries to go not only to the heathen, bu also to the dispersed of Israel, and to convince thos who will hear, that Jesus Christ is the Alpha and Omega of the Holy Scripture—that He is th Sun of Righteousness to enlighten and vivify the whole creation—that without Him God's purposes would be an inexplicable enigma—that Christ is both God and man, our Mediator, Redeemer, Sanctifier, High-priest, and King, the same yester-day, to-day, and for ever—that He ever liveth to make intercession for us—that He is omnipresent and omnipotent, all in all. They must testify o all that He is to those who in hearty repentanc and true faith turn to Him—that He gives them the remission of sins, peace, joy, and complet salvation, so that they can exclaim with St. Paul "Death is swallowed up in victory." They mus show how He has obtained for us all these benefits— by His humiliation and incarnation, His fulfil

ent of the law, His death and passion, His surrection and ascension, His intercession at e right hand of the Father, who so loved the orld that He gave His only-begotten Son, that hosoever believeth in Him should not perish but ave everlasting life.

This testimony has proved the message of peace many Jews in Abyssinia, so that they have ceived Christ into their hearts, acknowledged im as their true Messiah, and have been baptized His name. They have also, though in much cakness and imperfection, been as lights among e benighted Abyssinians, by their walk and con- ersation, so that the clergy especially began to ar their influence upon the debased Church of byssinia, and did their utmost to extinguish the ission, in which intention they seemed to be r *a while* successful.

How the Jewish mission may prosper under the resent political aspect of affairs in Abyssinia we o not yet know. But we do know that He who as the key of David can again in His own good me open this door for the conversion of many uls. His wisdom has seen fit to leave the work r a while in darkness, but this has been His mode dealing, both with individual souls and also with is whole Church, throughout all past ages. He s led them up and down from the lowest point the highest, that man may not glory in his own rk, but go forward in the labour of love with th, hope, and patience, trusting in God's all-

sufficient power to bring His own work to perfe
tion, to overcome all obstacles, and to crown wi
success each faithful and patient endeavour
promote His glory. Those who judge of the
matters on worldly principles and by the light
their own natural understanding, instead of b
God's revealed Word and purpose, will of cours
be at a loss to understand them. To such peop
the apostolic mode of missionary work, pointing t
sinner direct to Christ as the only Mediator betwe
God and man, would be equally incomprehensibl
The preaching of Christ crucified is to the Jew
a stumbling-block and to the Greeks foolishnes
They commend civilisation as the best method an
the most speedy in its results, though proofs a
wanting to confirm their assertion.

The author of the newest and most classically
written work on East Africa, Baron Carl Claus v
der Decken, who was murdered on the Dschub
river, has unfortunately taken this view of th
subject. He considers that the Evangelical mis
sionaries are to blame for teaching the negroes th
peculiar doctrines of the Christian religion, such a
the doctrine of theTrinity; he maintains that the
should rather, asin the middle ages, give new nam
to the heathen gods and heathen festivals, and
lead the people gradually into the new faith. H
thinks they should also, like the Catholics in Za
zibar, give the negroes a taste for work and th
baptize them.

One can hardly believe that a traveller born a

rought up in a Protestant country can take so perficial a view of this important subject. Did hrist and His apostles proceed on this plan? id they introduce Christianity by giving new ames to heathen institutions? Did they sub- itute outward observation for inward regeneration nd a new creation in Christ Jesus? That which s born of the flesh is flesh; Christ and His apostles ould have men spiritually and divinely renewed, s such only could ever have part in the kingdom f heaven. They would have men fulfil their chief nd in glorifying God, and then would they be ost competent to fulfil their duty towards their eighbour. No Evangelical missionary will be ndifferent, much less opposed to civilisation, ecause it is God's will that each should properly ill his appointed station in this world, but he will ot on that account give it an undue pre-eminence. he Gospel makes a man like Janus, with two aces, one towards heaven and the other towards arth, receiving gifts from both and having duties hich he owes both to the one and the other. oreover, the heathen in their natural ignorance ave no desire for civilisation, it is only when en- ghtened by the truths of Christianity that they come capable of being civilized—a fact which is ite overlooked by many.

Good houses have been built for the Indians nd they have been invited to inhabit them, but ey have expressly declared that they would rather am in the woods and live by hunting, like their

fathers. I myself wished to have a good do
made for the house of a heathen neighbour
Rabbai, but the offer was declined, as it was co
trary to custom, and he thought the spirits of l
forefathers might be displeased at the alteratic
and prevent rain from falling.

But it is quite otherwise with those of th
heathen to whom the truth of God has come wit
living power. Our first convert in Wanika Lan
came to me and said, without any suggestion o
my part, "I must have better clothing, I cann
go about in this state any longer. I must also hav
a better house, for in this smoke I c[illegible] neither rea
nor write; and I cannot keep slaves, or have mor
than one wife, or do any work on Sunday, becaus
these things are displeasing to God." We had r
need to excite in this man a desire for civilisatio
he felt inwardly moved towards it by the renewa
of his mind, and he worked steadily to improve hi
circumstances without asking any assistance fro
the mission, which should be given only in oc
casional and extreme cases, never as a means
obtaining proselytes who are such merely by pr
fession. Evangelical missions found their succe
upon the inward life, not on the outward professio
therefore they have no need to buy proselyte
They go on the principle that nothing can gi
peace to the conscience but the knowledge of Chr
Jesus the crucified and risen Saviour. If the wor
now rejects this Gospel and expects salvation fro
human sources, it will experience the truth of t

apostle's words in Rom. i. 22, "Professing themselves to be wise, they became fools."

In the South American states the fallacy of that method is clearly seen, which would give new names to heathen gods and idolatrous customs, as the means of transition to a purer faith. What have the aborigines gained from the Spaniards? What has been the result with the negroes when they have become civilized without the aid of Christianity? It has only opened the door of immorality and debasement. Civilisation without Christianity will but supply a handle for all kinds of licentiousness. If Christendom rejects the Gospel of Christ, and contents itself with human knowledge and wisdom, it will come to ruin, like the Grecks and Romans, in spite of all their refinement, or it will become a waste and a desert, like those Eastern Churches which were once in the bloom of Christian civilisation and beauty. We stand at a perilous point, a point of decision, whether we will hold to the truth of the Gospel or go forward in what is called progress and fall into the abyss tenanted by the powers of darkness. We ought not to be deceived because all seems fair and flourishing; when the tree is over rotten it must fall speedily with any violent tempest. The outward appearance will not render it secure, or delay the final stroke. The question is now to us, as to Israel of old, "What think ye of Christ?" On this question hangs the fate both of nations and individuals. (Psalm ii.) God will not only

work on the defensive, but also on the offensive, when He shall make the kingdoms of this world the kingdoms of His Son, and He shall rule over them.

For nearly six thousand years He has permitted the prince of this world and his emissaries to work their will, with but little limit and hindrance, but in the millennial Sabbath there shall be peace o earth—the meek shall possess the kingdom, t deceiver of the nations shall be cast down th Christ may reign on the earth, by His word an spirit, and sit down with His bride at the marriag supper. But before this takes place the enem has a short triumph. This is his hour and t power of darkness, when the Church of Chri must be buried with their Lord in a baptism suffering, until the morning of the resurrectio and the battle of Armageddon, when the Lor our God shall come and all the saints with Hin and they shall reign on earth a thousand years.

May this little book then prosper in its way, a excite in the hearts of many a truer interest f the Israelites in Abyssinia: so that the readers it may be led to practical effort and prayer their behalf, and thus its chief end will be a tained.

L. KRAP

KORNTHAL, NEAR STUTTGART,
WURTEMBERG. *April* 10, 1869.

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THE

FALASHAS (JEWS) OF ABYSSINIA.

I.—Historical Notice.

The meaning of the word *Falasha* (exiles, emigrants) shows that this people are not originally natives of Abyssinia, but that they emigrated thither from other lands. Up to this time, however, no documents have been found amongst them or amongst the native Christians which give any conclusive evidence as to the time and circumstances of that immigration. Our only way therefore of obtaining information on the subject, is by comparing the oral traditions and sayings of the Falashas and Christians, and in doing this it is often very difficult to determine which version is nearest the truth.

The first party, among the Christians, fully believe in the tradition respecting Solomon and Menelek. We read in 2 Chron. ix. 12, that king Solomon gave to the queen of Sheba (or the South) whatsoever she desired and asked. The legend tells us that Solomon had a son by the queen of

the south, whom he named Menelek—that the queen reigned over Axum, whither she returned with her son, but subsequently sent him back to his father at Jerusalem to be educated. When Menelek was grown up, the Jews begged the king to send him again to his mother, as his presence in Jerusalem might give rise to political disturbances after Solomon's death. Solomon was unwilling to grant their request, but they gave him no rest until he consented, only on condition that every Jew should send his first-born son with Menelek to Abyssinia. Thus it came to pass that Menelek was made king of Abyssinia by Solomon, and entered the country attended by a great number of Jews, who contracted marriages with the native women.

Amongst these Jews were twelve priests descended from Aaron, who were to institute Divine worship in Ethiopia according to the Jewish ordinance. The high-priest was called Asaria. Solomon had an Ark of the Covenant prepared for the priests of Menelek to take to Abyssinia. They, however, stole the true Ark (of Moses) out of the Temple, leaving the false one in Jerusalem in its stead, and brought it to Axum, where they pretend that it still exists. God by a miracle prevented the discovery of their theft by Solomon. So runs the first tradition.

The second party, among the Falashas, affirm that their forefathers fled into Egypt at the time of the Assyrian and Babylonian captivity; that they

came up the Nile and established themselves in the western part of Abyssinia, in the province of Quara. During the last few centuries they have spread themselves also through the provinces of Demhea, Tschelga, Wogara, Semien, &c.

This opinion gains importance from the fact that the language of the Falashas, which is equally distinct from the Hebrew and Ethiopian tongues, is the language of Quara, and that the greater part of the inhabitants of that province are Falashas.

A third party affirm that the Falashas were driven into the mountains of Abyssinia at the destruction of Jerusalem by the Romans. This opinion has few supporters, and is doubtless incorrect.

The Falashas know nothing of either the Babylonian or the Jerusalem Talmud, which were composed during and after the time of the captivity. They also do not observe the Feasts of Purim and of the Dedication of the Temple, which, although of human origin, are still solemnly kept by the Jews of our time. They know nothing of the Tephilin which the European and other Jews put on during prayer. From these circumstances we may conclude that the Falashas came to Abyssinia during the time that elapsed between the reign of Solomon and the departure of the Jewish remnant, under Johanan, into Egypt. (Jer. xliii.)

It is well to remember that in the first two traditions there is probably a great mixture of truth and error, especially in the story of Menelek. So far is certain, that at the time when Christianity

was introduced into Abyssinia by Frumentius, there were Jews already in the country who possessed and observed the Orit, *i.e.*, the law of Moses.* The Psalms and other books of the Old Testament were translated into Ethiopian, after the commencement of the Christian era, by Zahri and Pauli.†

I may here insert an extract from an Ethiopian manuscript given me by an Abyssinian, Debtera Saneb, the king's secretary at the fortress of Magdala. During my sojourn there in 1859-60, Saneb found a book in the royal library containing the history and genealogy of the ancient kings of Ethiopia, and also the following passage respecting the Falashas. "Christianity was introduced into Abyssinia 331 years after the birth of Christ by Abuna Salama, whose former name was Frumenatos or Frumentius. At that time the Ethiopian kings reigned over Axum. Before the Christian religion was known in Ethiopia half the inhabitants were Jews, who observed the law, (the Orit,) the other half were worshippers of Sando, (the dragon)."

As the Orit only is mentioned here, it is evident that the Abyssinian Jews at the time of Frumentius did not possess the books of the Prophets, (even if

* The Falashas and also the Abyssinian Christians add to the five books of Moses, the books of Joshua, Judges, Samuel, and Ruth, and call it the Orit.

† According to the Abyssinian tradition, the priest Asarias, on his arrival in Axum, translated the Orit from the Hebrew into the Ethiopian language.

the Psalms were known to them,) which would have been the case had they only come to Abyssinia after the destruction of Jerusalem by the Romans. It appears that they were formerly called "Jews," and that the name "Falasha," (exiles,) was given them afterwards, as a term of reproach.

When Christianity was introduced into Abyssinia, probably not altogether in a pure form, many of the Jews may have refused to receive it, and therefore have been banished by the Emperor to Quara, the western province. From ancient times down to the present date Quara has always been a place of banishment, whither the Abyssinian monarchs have sent rebels and persons guilty of treason or sedition.

A proof that there were Jews in Abyssinia before the Babylonish captivity is found in the prophecy of Zephaniah, (iii. 10,) "From beyond the rivers of Ethiopia my suppliants, even the daughter of my dispersed, shall bring mine offering."

It can hardly be doubted that Jews came to Abyssinia, up the Nile, from Egypt. The exhortation of the prophet Jeremiah, (chap. xliv.,) addressed to the idolatrous Jews in the land of Egypt, bears on this subject. They had established themselves in various parts of that country, having fled thither after the death of king Josiah, during the many battles with the Chaldeans. From Pathros, (Thebes,) whither they were driven, they could easily have reached Abyssinia and taken up their abode in the province of Quara.

Tradition says that Quara in former times was inhabited only by Falashas. This idea is confirmed by the fact that the Jews or Falashas throughout Abyssinia possess no "rest," that is land by inheritance, except in Quara. I have often met with Falashas who have come from Quara to Gondar, Dembea, Tschelga, and other places, who have told me that the "rest," or inheritance of their fathers in Quara could not be alienated, but belonged to the family for ever.

Another circumstance remains to be mentioned, namely, in what manner the Falashas came to worship Sanbat, (the goddess of the Sabbath.) When we consider their form of worship to her we cannot fail to recognise in her the queen of heaven, the goddess Ashtaroth, spoken of in Judges ii. 13; 1 Sam. xii. 10; 1 Kings xi. 3, 33, &c. The Falashas not only pray to Sanbat, but they bring her meat-offerings and drink-offerings, consisting of loaves of bread and beer. They also offer her incense and various burnt-offerings.

During my missionary labours among the Falashas, I had an opportunity of learning their views respecting Sanbat. As I was once speaking to a Falasha debtera, (learned man,) in the presence of another Falasha, about the worship of Sanbat as a breach of the second commandment, he answered me with the greatest indifference, in the very words used by the women of Pathros to the prophet Jeremiah, (Jer. xliv. 16,) "We will do as our fathers have done," he said. "Thus they answered Jere-

miah in Egypt: 'Since we left off to burn incense to the queen of heaven and poured out drink-offerings unto her, we have wanted all things,' &c." "We fear that if we leave off serving Sanbat she would withdraw her blessing, for she is the goddess of sunshine and rain, and *all* temporal comforts." In short, he represented her as the goddess of fate, to whom vows are paid by all sick people, childless women, and persons in any sort of distress. He also made it clear to me that this idolatrous worship of the queen of heaven had been brought by Jews to Abyssinia.

This seems a fitting place to mention a book written in the Ethiopian character. It bears the name Te-e-sa-sa Sanbat, (Sabbath commandments,) and contains, amidst all kinds of absurdities and some very objectionable passages respecting Sanbat, the statement that ten thousand times ten thousand angels stand beside her to do her bidding. If this book be the work of a monk it is unhappily a proof that outward mortification is of no avail without inward godliness, for he who could give such a description of Sanbat could scarcely take up the words of Job, "I made a covenant with mine eyes."

There can be no doubt that Jews have come into Abyssinia from Arabia and by the Red Sea.

In the year 1863 His Majesty King Theodorus had a genealogical statement read in the public court of justice in Gondar, before a vast assembly of people, natives and Europeans, proving his direct and immediate descent from Adam, David, and Solomon,

through Menelek, father of the whole line of the monarchs of Ethiopia. The question of the legitimacy of Menelek's birth is a question into which none of the Abyssinian sages care to enter.

The European traveller cannot fail to notice how many Jewish customs are observed by the Abyssinian Christians, both in their public worship and in private life. Indeed they bear strong traces of the Jewish character, but unfortunately, chiefly of its darker side. It should not, however, be assumed that there are not some Nathanaels amongst them. God be thanked that for our comfort we have many examples, both among the Falashas and the native Christians, of true sincerity of heart. Only it is a rare case, and therefore we can scarcely go too far in comparing the general character of the Abyssinian Christians and Falashas with the descriptions given by the prophets. (Hosea iv.; Jer. ix. 3—6; iii. 1—8; Isaiah lix. 1—15; Micah iii. 1—3; vii. 1—5, &c.)

The Abyssinian history is entirely silent as to the movements of the Falashas after the introduction and spread of Christianity. Tradition says that the Falashas inhabited the province of Quara and a portion of the provinces Alafa and Tankel, that they were governed by their own rulers, that about the year A.D. 1000 they became very powerful, possessed themselves of the whole of western Abyssinia, persecuted the Christians, and endeavoured to extirpate their religion. It further states that they drove out the royal family, who fled to Shoa, and

remained there 250 years, until, in the 13th century, Yecuna Amlak ascended the throne of his fathers. The Christians, forgetful of the command of their Master, "Love your enemies," then repaid in equal measure the injuries done them by the Falashas. They put thousands of them to death, and drove the rest back into Semien, Quara, and Tschelga, making them pay tribute to the Christian king of Abyssinia. The craftsmen and artisans amongst them—masons, carpenters, and smiths—were however soon recalled by the Christian king and well paid in his service.

Thus it came to pass that soon in Semien and in the neighbourhood of Gondar, Falasha villages sprang up. These work-people were joined by others, such as women skilled in pottery, and husbandmen, who established themselves in various parts of western Abyssinia, and supported themselves by their labour. We hear no more of persecution and oppression in later centuries. Every Falasha village had its own judge, which is still the case, he is called Shoom, *i.e.*, a civil officer, and is subject to the judge of the district, "Belada," or, in a town, to the chief magistrate of the town. The chief magistrate of Gondar is called Kantiba. The complainants bring their cause from the local judge to the judge of the district, and appeal from him to the king. Under these circumstances justice is often terribly abused, and I have continually seen the words of the prophet exemplified: "They hunt every man his brother with a net. The prince asketh and the

judge asketh for a reward. The best of them is as a brier, the most upright is sharper than a thorn hedge." (Micah vii. 3—4.) And also the verse in chap. iii. 11: "The heads thereof judge for reward, and the priests thereof teach for hire and the prophets thereof divine for money."

II.—Dwelling-Places and Population.

The Falashas dwell for the most part in separate villages. When however they carry on their trades among Christians, they usually choose a quarter outside the town or village, and shield themselves by fences and enclosures from contamination, which the mere entrance of a Christian or Mahommedan might bring upon them. The monks never live in mixed villages, but only in those exclusively inhabited by Falashas, and at a great distance from Christian dwellings. Falashas live in the following provinces of Abyssinia, Semien, Wogara, Armatschoho, Walkait, Tschelga, Dembea, Tankel, Dagusa, Alafa, Kunsula, Atschafer, Agarv-Meder, and Quara; these fourteen provinces all lie west of Taccazie. Since 1862 some hundred families have been dwelling in Schire. (*See* "Prophets.")

After the sacking of Dembea in 1863, when the Falashas and Christians were deprived of all their property, many of the Dembeans, and amongst them a great number of Falashas, who had escaped

death by famine, wandered into Bagemeder, Belessa, and Lasta, where some of them were received by the king's command and employed in his work; others earned a livelihood by their trades. All of them however only wait a favourable opportunity to return to their homes in Tankel, Dembea, Saccalt, &c.

The dwellings of the Falashas are similar in structure and arrangement to those of the Abyssinian Christians, but with this difference in favour of the former, namely, that their strict laws respecting purification exercise a wholesome influence over their mode of daily life, and particularly so, according to our European ideas, as regards the preparing of their food. It is a well-known saying among the European residents in Abyssinia, "If you wish to preserve your appetite, keep as far from the kitchen as possible;" and though travellers in the East have frequently described their miseries in this respect, they are far exceeded by the discomforts which those in this country daily experience. But I shall have occasion in another place to speak more fully on this point.

The houses of the Falashas are round in shape, in diameter from 10 to 20 feet, with a court to correspond. They are built larger or smaller according to the circumstances of the owner, the richer class have a stone wall, the poorer only a fence of faggots and branches, driven six inches into the ground, and about six feet high. Three or four branches are placed round, bound strongly

together with bark or leather. This wall, called Kétkita, is supported inside by props or sloping buttresses, to protect the house from cold or wind. Some of the Falashas in the neighbourhood of Gondar possess fire-proof houses. Nothing about them is inflammable except the roof, which in *all* Abyssinian houses is made of wood and reeds, and covered with straw. These fire-proof dwellings are built with a wall 13 to 20 feet high, in which a sort of bastion is inserted, this is formed of beams and boards covered with earth to the depth of one or two feet, and prevents fire from gaining ground inside the dwelling. Cases of fire have been known; in which families have remained in the inner part of such houses, with closely shut doors, until the roof was perfectly consumed, when they came out again unhurt. If fire breaks out in a house which is not thus constructed all the property is inevitably lost—the flames catch the thatched roof and envelope the whole building with the speed of lightning. During my stay in Dshenda a fire broke out which in half an hour rendered twenty Falasha families homeless. An ordinary wooden house costs 4 to 10 thalers,* a stone house, 13 to 30 thalers, one that is fire-proof, 80 to 150 thalers, (£22 10*s.*) The household furniture, both of the Falashas and native Christians, consists of but few articles. They have a wooden bedstead covered with leather plaited together, and called Alga, one or more seats with plaited borders, and a table made of

* A thaler is equal to four shillings.

reeds woven together, which is folded and hung up on the wall, except at meals. Some earthen vessels, cooking-utensils, bowls and dishes, wooden or earthen, a kneading-trough, a baking-dish, (Mogogo,) a corn-mill, a fire-place for baking and cooking, baskets of straw for bread, clothes, &c., sieves and vessels for preparing the corn, complete the list of their possessions. If any of the family can read, one or more leathern bags, containing books written on parchment, are to be seen hanging on the wall. They have also large store-places for their corn, made of straw and clay dried in the sun.

The darkness of their houses strikes a European very unpleasantly. The door is often the only opening, or at the most they have a few little round holes in addition. Windows are universally shunned. If they need light for any difficult work, such as writing, embroidery, &c., they never sit in the shade, but in the most glaring sunshine, and that without any covering on their head or neck. The preparation of food, and other household work, is however done by the housewife in the dark recesses of her hut. This arises chiefly from their dread of the shadow of any human being. If a stranger comes unexpectedly into their house, (which is looked upon as a great intrusion,) any mishap with the oil, wine, or beer, and any failure, greater or less, is laid to his account by the housewife, as caused by his shadow, or the evil eye. The "shadow" is identical with the evil eye of the Arabs. Therefore the Abyssinians never carry any food or medicine un-

covered, for fear of the shadow. They take their meals in the strictest privacy; a covering is then hung before the door, in spite of the darkness, and it would be considered the most flagrant breach of courtesy to intrude upon a family at meal-times.

One or two points remain to be noticed under this head.

No Falasha that is a layman may enter the house of a monk. If however a Christian, through inadvertence, enters the court of even an ordinary Falasha house, or sits down on a stone, the whole place is carefully cleansed, and washed if possible.

One peculiar custom common to Falashas and Christians is that they never reside in a newly-built house until, as they say, blood has flowed in it. This is a special sacrifice, usually of a sheep, or amongst the poorer classes, of a hen. There is also the consecration of the house, at which the Talla, (beer,) is used, or the Datsch, (*i.e.*, a kind of mead or honey-wine,) according to circumstances. If this sacrifice is not observed, which is often the case with Europeans, and a death occurs in the house shortly after, the natives consider it a clear proof that the house, or rather the spirits presiding in it, have required their offering, (Kasa.) Also in the granary a white hen is sacrificed.

As to the number of the Falasha population, no accurate statistics can be obtained, it is therefore impossible to make an exact calculation, but it may be estimated at about one-fifth of a million, (200,000.)

III.—Food.

The chief food of the Falashas is Tef-bread, with a sort of pepper soup called Wotz. Meat is a rarity amongst them. Excepting at their passover feast, when they eat unleavened cakes made of wheat-flour, or of Shimbera, a kind of peas meal, they live on Tef-bread, or more properly Tef-cakes. The poorer classes eat Shimbera-cakes, or bread made of Mashela, a small kind of maize, called in Sudan Dura, also cakes made with barley and Dagusa; this last is a sort of grain which is very hard to grind, the bread from it grates between the teeth as if mixed with sand.

Those who have no land of their own buy their grain at the market; it is carried home on the donkey, or on the woman's back, and she and her servant or slave proceed to cleanse it, grind, leaven, and bake it. The mill consists of two stones, one large, the other smaller, but tolerably heavy. The corn is placed between them, the grinder then holds the smaller stone with both hands, and works it backwards and forwards upon the larger stone, scattering fresh handfuls of corn between them from time to time. In this way they manage to grind it about as fine as oatmeal. It is easy to imagine that with this toilsome way of proceeding the meal often runs short, and there is perhaps not enough for the daily consumption, but this is more particularly the case when several festivals follow one another. The poor women are then often obliged to slave day

and night to prepare a sufficient quantity of bread. They frequently lighten their work by singing as they grind, but their songs are not of the most edifying description. The meal is then sifted into a wooden or earthen dish, mixed with some leaven and water, and made into a very thin dough or batter, similar to our pancakes. This is poured into a large vessel, set in a warm place to rise, and then made into thin cakes, of a tolerable size, and baked on plates made of clay over a wood fire. These Teff-cakes, with Wotz very highly seasoned, and sour milk, are the favourite food of the Falashas and all the natives. Wotz is made out of roasted Shimbera, mixed with a great deal of red pepper and many other herbs, melted butter or oil is added, and it is then called Shirro. They make many kinds of Wotz out of Shimbera and rushes, for which they have various names; but whatever the contents of the black dish may look like, they have all the same flavour of red pepper.

Linseed is much used amongst the Abyssinians, especially by the Christians during their fasts. It is roasted in the oven, or Mogogo, then ground or crushed, mixed with a little water and salt, flavoured with red pepper and other spices, and thus prepared makes a savoury and nutritious dish. In cooking meat they are extremely particular, each little bit is cut off separately, and washed again and again in water, until every trace of blood disappears; it is then boiled, seasoned with pepper and butter, and

served up in various ways, according to the cook's fancy.

The food is brought to table in the vessel in which it has been cooked. A child or servant then brings round water for the hands, presenting it first to the father, then to the guests, then to the mother, and lastly to children and servants. A skin is then spread on the ground, the table taken down and unfolded, bread and Wotz placed upon it, the family take their seats, and the father of the family repeats the following prayers :—

"Praised be the Lord, the God of Israel, the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, the God of the whole earth."

The family answer, "Amen."

"O God, give us thy blessing."

"Amen."

"Bless us with the blessing wherewith thou hast blessed Abraham."

"Amen."

"Bless us as thou hast blessed the store-house of Abitara."*

"Amen."

"Bless our going out and our coming in."

"Amen."

"Thou who art the keeper of Israel keep us."

"Amen."

* Abitara was a godly woman and very benevolent to the poor, and God, says the tradition, blessed her so signally, that however much she gave away, her storehouse was never empty.

"Thou hast said, The praise of men is my food; therefore we praise and thank thee world without end."

"Amen."

"Praise the Lord with a new song; give glory to his Name; let the earth praise him and all that therein is. Hallelujah!"

"Amen."

After the prayer a servant or member of the household girds himself, *i.e.*, takes his upper garment from his shoulders and twists it about his waist, leaving the upper part of the body bare, (this is a ceremony always observed in the presence of a superior—the people must gird themselves on passing the royal tent or palace, &c.) Next he breaks off large pieces of Tef-cake, and fetches therewith a handful out of the pot, which has just come off the fire. The master is helped first, then the guests, and so on. If they wish to be particularly friendly they feed each other; they take up a piece of bread with some pepper-soup upon it and put it into each other's mouths. Husband and wife do this when they are on good terms.

N.B.—Fingers answer the purpose of spoons and forks at every meal in Abyssinia.

If fresh meat has been killed, it appears as a sort of dessert. A piece of fat meat is roasted over a charcoal fire, having been previously rubbed with salt, pepper, gall, &c. The eating of raw meat, called Brundo, is considered a barbarous custom among the Falashas; by the Abyssinian

Christians, however, it is reckoned the greatest luxury. As soon as the meal is finished the table is hung up again in its place, and water is given for washing the hands. Then the master of the house repeats the following prayers, to each of which the family answer, "Amen."

"God be praised! glory be to him! for he has refreshed us with meat and drink."

"Amen."

"Keep us from thirst."

"Amen."

"Have mercy upon us, and forgive us!"

"Amen."

"Clothe the naked and feed the hungry, O God."

"Amen."

"Thou givest to all their meat in due season. Thou openest thine hand and satisfiest the desire of every living thing. O Lord, do thou give to all who lift up their hands unto thee, food drink, and clothing, according to their need."

"Amen."

"Our God, whose word is truth and his ways righteous and merciful, grant us his blessing."

"Amen."

"Save thy people, and bless thine inheritance."

"Amen."

"Peace be upon Israel."

"Amen."

Their mode of slaughtering is as follows. The beast is laid on the ground, with its legs tied

together, and the Kaahen, or priest, divides the neck with several blows from a double-bladed knife, which is kept exclusively for this purpose, repeating as he does so, "Blessed be the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob." After the neck is divided the feet are untied, and those present stand round the animal until no sign of life remains; the skin is then taken off, the body cut open, and the intestines carefully searched. If they contain the smallest particle of leather or rag, the meat is rekus (unclean,) and is left to be devoured by the dogs and hyenas. If nothing is found the flesh is cut up into pieces.*

The chief drink of the Falashas is Talla (beer) and Datsch (mead). This last is only used by the richer class at their festivals. Talla is made from various species of grain. They prefer several kinds of grain mixed, baked into cakes, then softened and rubbed down with a small quantity of water. Crushed barley and Gesho, Rammus, Staddo, is then mixed with it, and it is left to ferment. This mixture is called Teff-teff, it is put into a large jar, carefully stopped up with cow-dung or clay. Beer is easily made from Teff-teff, by putting one part of this mixture to four parts of water, pouring

* Each sect in Abyssinia has its own formula in slaughtering animals, and no one will eat meat killed by a member of another sect. The Falashas kill in the name of the God of Israel, the Christians in the name of the Triune God, the Mahommedans say "B'ism Allah," the Kamants say "Besek besek sek," *i.e.*, "Strike boldly through."

it through a sieve into an earthen jar, which is carefully covered, and leaving it to ferment. In two days it becomes tolerably clear, and will produce intoxication. It is, however, a more wholesome drink than the mead, or honey-wine.

This last is made as follows. One part of honey is mixed with six parts of water and set in the sun for a day. The honey unites with the water, the wax floats on the top, and is carefully skimmed off. A small portion of Gesho leaves slightly roasted is then added, the mixture closely covered down and set to ferment in the sun for four or six days, until the sweet taste disappears. It is then ready for use, and tastes very like cider. Those who wish to make it very intoxicating add Gerowa or Zado instead of Gesho leaves, to both wine and beer. These plants are, however, very hurtful, producing in most cases headache and nausea.

IV.—Clothing.

Before passing on to this part of my subject, I would just remark on the uncivilized state of the Falashas and the other natives of Abyssinia. This should be taken into consideration, and will account for the many customs repugnant to European ideas, by which one is continually reminded of the curse upon the posterity of Ham. Profligacy and impurity are the order of the day, especially among the Christians, and the Old

Testament ceremonial which they profess to observe is often made by them the excuse for greater shamelessness and indecency. In describing their dress, according to Abyssinian rule, it may be well to begin with the clergy.

The monks wear wide white trousers (Sanafil) reaching down to the ankle, a loose white shirt down to their knees, and a cotton shawl or mantle, (Shama,) 9 or 10 yards in length and 5 or 6 yards broad, with a wider or narrower strip of red at the end of it. They have also a white cap, round which they wind a piece of white cotton stuff 5 to 6 yards in length, making an immense kind of turban, which they call Mattemtemia, (the wrapper.) Each monk possesses three complete suits of apparel. One, called the holy dress, is worn during service in the Mesgeed, and is never taken out of it. The second they wear in their own houses, and the third when they come into contact with other people. They wear no beard, and they carry a little book, "Ardid," as a defence against evil influence, and as a sign of sanctity.

The dress of the priests is similar to that of the monks; their shirts and trousers are made rather narrower, and they wear no cap, but only a turban. The clothing of the laity consists of a pair of trousers and a Shama. Among the richer classes the Shama is worth 3 to 6 thalers; among the poorer it costs only from 1 to 2 thalers, equal to 4 or 8 shillings.

The dress of the women is a very wide cotton

garment of double stuff, with a strip of the same, three yards long, tied round the waist as a girdle. All except the very poor wear a Shama or Gaby thrown over this dress. Those who are well off have their dresses more or less richly embroidered. They wear silver chains in their hair, silver rings and ear-rings, also bracelets and rings round their ankles. In spite of their simple costume the Abyssinian women are as disposed to vanity as the rest of their sex. When they go out they like particularly to make a grand appearance, even in borrowed feathers; and if they do not possess a Shama, or embroidered garment, or silver ornaments, they will procure them from a neighbour, especially at the time of any religious festival. They also wear a string of small red beads round the neck, but they are forbidden by the monks to wear beads of other colours. They are also forbidden to wear Kitaab, or amulets, but many of them do so in secret, as a charm against various diseases; they are mostly written by the Christians.

The Falasha women are not veiled. They do not cut their curly hair short, though they now and then hold a shearing, for sundry good reasons. A Falasha woman never plaits her hair. The Abyssinian coiffure is a most elaborate and complicated affair, it takes nearly the whole day to undo the fine plaits of several weeks' standing, and to replace them in the approved fashion. The operation is only performed once in six or eight weeks, and to prevent inconvenience they have a

habit of anointing themselves with butter, which smears their clothing and renders their appearance dirty and disgusting in the extreme, especially when one reflects that it is by them food is cooked and prepared. In fact any inquiry into kitchen matters by European eyes results in desperation. This was the case with one of the European residents in our neighbourhood. Day after day the cook remained in the most horrible state of dirtiness. Threats and warnings were of no avail, and matters were continually made worse by fresh anointings. At last the master of the house could contain himself no longer, and perceiving that in spite of prohibitions an extra amount of grease had been bestowed on the cook's plaited head-dress, he seized her just as she was serving up the dinner and drove her out of the door, with the threat that if she did not reappear in a more presentable condition, her hair should be shorn off close to her head. This will show that the Falasha custom of not plaiting the hair is preferable as regards cleanliness.

The clothing of the Falashas is all made of native cotton,* which was introduced into western Abyssinia from the south, and is brought to market, the women combing and spinning it themselves. The thread is held in the left hand, and in the right a simple kind of distaff, by which the thread is spun. The weaving trade is entirely confined

* The cotton cultivated in Abyssinia is not sufficient for their wants. Plenty of cotton is imported from the Sudan, *via* Mattamacte.

to the Falashas in western Abyssinia, except in Gondar, where there are Mahommedan weavers, who however work for the Christians and not for the Falashas.

The fringes and the blue border which the children of Israel were commanded to put on their garments, (Num. xv. 37—40,) are not observed by the Falashas, they say on account of their poverty. The common people wear no covering for the head, and shoes are unknown amongst them. Travellers, however, generally wear sandals.

V.—Personal Appearance.

As regards outward appearance, the Falashas are for the most part a strong fine-looking race. They are dark brown in colour, like the rest of the Abyssinians, but the complexion of the women is somewhat lighter. Their hair is black and curly, as also the beard, which they never shave, only clipping the ends occasionally when it grows too long. The men shave their heads occasionally.

As a rare exception, a Falasha may sometimes be seen with the black skin and pouting lips which mark the negro race; in such a case the negro blood is always found to be on the mother's side. The Falashas keep slaves, like the other natives, but they make proselytes of them, and then treat them like members of the family. They are not sold again, and receive much better treatment than among the Mahommedans.

VI.—Trades.

The Falashas are a most industrious and diligent people in the way of business. There are among them masons, carpenters, smiths, weavers, farmers, and merchants, though these last are more rarely found. The pottery and earthenware used by the natives is almost exclusively made by the Falasha women. They mould all the vessels by hand, and sell them in the market. There are no very rich people among the Falashas, but many of them are well off and prosperous. If they were more economical in their habits they might be much richer. They spend an immense deal on their feasts, and have the same idea as the Abyssinian Christians, that on such occasions every one must eat, drink, and sleep as much as possible. They are also immoderately fond of lawsuits. The avaricious officials know how to take advantage of this disposition; money, cows, clothing, and furniture are made over to the Shoom, or judge, during these interminable quarrels, until at last even the successful party often finds himself in the condition of the savage, who having fought with his neighbour and killed him for the sake of his earrings, found that he himself had lost both ears in the struggle. Not unfrequently they have to give up their clothing, and all their small household possessions, and even to beg, in order to pay the judge.

VII.—Birth and Circumcision of their Children.

Before the birth of an infant the mother retires to a hut set apart for her. Every rich family has one of its own, near the house, the poorer classes share one between several families. Here she remains entirely apart from the rest of the household, her meals are brought to her, and she sees no one except her nurse. When the child is born, it is held by the nurse under the arms while another woman pours a quantity of cold water over its body; it is then blessed in the name of the God of Israel. A new-born infant is never dressed, but simply rolled up in an old ragged garment, and put to sleep; when it is hungry it is fed with butter. The mother does not nurse it for three days, and even then it is continually fed with butter, often until it is a twelvemonth old. While very young it is not very often washed, but rubbed all over with butter. The Falashas circumcise all their children. This is done on the eighth day, unless it falls on a Saturday, when they defer it to the ninth, that the Sabbath may not be broken. The mother carries the child in her arms during the first few weeks, but afterwards transfers it to her back; where it is securely fastened by a leathern band passed round the neck and waist, which serves it both as a support and a covering. In forty days after the birth of a son (or if of a daughter, in eighty days) the mother bathes herself and her child in the river, puts on clean

apparel, and brings a sin-offering, (see Lev. xii. 6—8,) consisting of a pair of doves, which have been snared by her husband, as there are no tame doves in Abyssinia. After the offering the woman and her child receive the priest's blessing, are sprinkled with holy water, and she is then for the first time permitted to return to her own house and family.

VIII.—The First-born.

The command of the Lord, Exod. xiii. 2, "Sanctify unto me all the first-born, whatsoever openeth the womb among the children of Israel, both of man and of beast, it is mine," is religiously observed among the Falashas. When the first-born is a son, he is not unfrequently dedicated by his parents to a monastic life, and set apart at the age of eight or ten years for that purpose.

The first-born of cattle is brought to the priest when it is a year old, in direct opposition to Exod. xxii. 30. The flesh is eaten only by the priests, and upon the same day that it is slaughtered, the remainder is burnt before the going down of the sun.

If the first-born of cattle be a female it is retained by the owner, but the milk and butter afforded by it belong to the priest. The first-born of an ass they redeem with a lamb. (See Exod. xxxiv. 19, 20.)

IX.—The Monks (Monoksie.)

One of the most remarkable features in the manners and customs of the Falashas is their monastic life. The founder of their order of monks, Aba Zebra, lived in the fourth century after Christ, in the province Armatshoho, in a cavern called Hoharewa. There he spent his whole time in the study of the law, and it is related that he healed the sick through prayer, and the laying-on of hands. Great crowds followed him, to whom he preached the word of God, exhorting them to fear God and to lead a holy life. The gifts brought to him by those who sought his aid he distributed among the poor and needy. He himself lived on herbs and roots. His self-denying life, and the respect paid him by the Falashas, excited in other minds a desire to follow his example. Several youths forsook their homes and joined the saint in his retreat, but their conduct after a time proved too clearly that their inward sanctity did not correspond to their outward profession, and disgraceful outbreaks occurred, which obliged Aba Zebra to institute most severe rules to prevent their recurrence.

The cave Hoharewa is to this day a place of pilgrimage among the Falashas. About 200 monks live there in one village. As I have already remarked, eldest sons are often devoted by their parents to a monastic life, but many youths join the order of their own free will. Their time of

probation lasts for several years, during which they faithfully serve the monks in house and field work, they learn to read, and commit to memory the whole of the Psalter and various prayers. Before they are formally received into the order they are at liberty if they will to retract, and to return to their friends. They generally take the vows at from 18 to 20 years of age. On the day appointed a great feast is held, at which monks assemble from all the neighbouring villages. The laws given by Moses for the consecration of the Levites are then observed, but these are followed by unholy rites which will not bear description, and which cost many their lives.

The Falasha monks lay heavy burdens upon themselves in endeavouring to work out a righteousness of their own. They undergo severe fastings and mortifications; many of them retire into the deserts, where they subsist on herbs and roots, and sometimes die of hunger. Many such cases came under my notice during my missionary work in Dshenda. An old monk, Aba Ambery, with whom I had often conversed about the salvation of his soul, and who had repeatedly confessed his belief in Jesus as the Son of God, growing weary of life, was carried by his relatives to a cavern, a vessel of water placed near him, and he was literally left to die of starvation. He had known the truth, but it did not make him free, he dared not, as he said, bring disgrace upon his brethren. Thus are fulfilled the words of the Apostle, "As

they did not like to retain God in their knowledge, God gave them over to a reprobate mind, to do those things which are not convenient." Had this aged pilgrim been enabled to receive and confess Christ as his Saviour, in spite of disgrace and persecution, how calmly and cheerfully might he have awaited his end, in Christian faith and submission.

According to the statements of the Falashas, monks sometimes throw themselves from high rocks, less perhaps as an act of merit than with the mad persuasion of more speedily attaining certain and eternal glory.

Great learning is not to be found either among the monks or the rest of the Falashas. As regards the Pentateuch, they are chiefly acquainted with the laws of sacrifice, purification, &c. Most of them are necessarily conversant with the history of the Jewish nation down to the time of the Babylonian captivity, and there are a few who have read the Siena Aihud, (History of the Jews,) translated from Josephus. Our mission has first been the means of leading them to study the prophetic Scriptures.

In receiving the truth, the monks and the Kaahen, or priests, are perhaps of all classes the most inaccessible. They will converse freely about various passages in Holy Scripture, but when a prophecy relating to the Messiah is urged upon them, and they see no way of escape, they take refuge in the obstinate declaration, "Our fathers did not believe in Christ, neither will we believe on Him,"

The spiritual head or superior of the monks, and of all the Falashas, lives chiefly in Quara, and is called Aba Simeon. Every province has its chief priest, all of whom, however, are subject to the one in Quara, and are appointed by him. With but few exceptions, the leaders and teachers of the Falashas may all be described by the words of the prophet, Isa. lvi. 10—12, "His watchmen are blind, they are all ignorant;" or by the passages in Ezek. xxxiv. 2—4; Hosea iv. 8.

The Falasha monks only eat food entirely prepared by themselves. Even the Falashas are unclean in their eyes, and no lay person, man or woman, dare enter their dwellings. Together with their service in the Mesgeed they occupy themselves in husbandry, and keep cattle and bees; they also make wooden vessels and spoons for sale. When several live together, one of them undertakes the education of boys—girls never receive any instruction. Their course of education consists only of learning to read the Ethiopian character and committing the Psalter to memory. Boys who intend to be monks, Kaahen, or Debtera, must learn the book "Sauasau," a kind of Ethiopian grammar or dictionary, in order that on Sabbath and feast-days they may be able to translate into Amharic, for the people, those portions of the law which are always read in the Ethiopian tongue. The Debtera for the most part attend the Christian schools. There is a school in connection with every principal church.

The Falashas share the Jewish feeling of hatred towards Jesus the Son of God, but strangely enough seem to know nothing of a coming Messiah. They, like the Abyssinian Christians, look for a king Theodorus, who is to come from the east and to reign over all nations, under whose rule they will all be converted to Judaism—the Christians of course say to Christianity.

I once became acquainted with a monk, Aba Mahari, who had a firm persuasion that the time was near when God would gather the Jews out of all nations into the land of their fathers. He believed that they would then rebuild their temple at Jerusalem, as described in the prophecy of Ezekiel, and serve God according to the law of Moses.

There is something very peculiar in the outward appearance of the monks, especially in the expression of their countenances. But for their dress they look more like the very old women of the country, so wrinkled and haggard and unnatural do their faces become under the privations they endure.

May it please the Lord speedily to remove the veil from the hearts of these poor people, who in their ignorance doubtless long after salvation and peace. May He pour upon them the spirit of grace and supplication, that forsaking the filthy rags of their own righteousness, they may acknowledge Him who of God is made unto us wisdom, and righteousness, sanctification, and redemption.

There is yet another class of monks, who

hardly deserve the name. They are those who in their old age, and perhaps after several marriages, assume the monk's cowl, in order to close their lives in a saintly and meritorious manner. I know nothing of these saints except that they are most inveterate beggars.

In connection with the monks I would here mention a little circumstance that occurred in our missionary work. We had laboured for some time among the Falashas without seeing the slightest result. Suddenly, in consequence of their searching the Scriptures, a great movement took place amongst them. Those of the laity who thus read and profited, challenged the monks and Kaahen to defend their faith, and declared their intention of being baptized. The monks, who until then had been our best friends, tried the force of cunning. They said, "The European Jews have sent the missionaries to Christianize the Falashas. They know well that God is about to gather the Jewish people into their own land, and they wish to make Christians of the Falashas, that so they may have no share or inheritance in the land of their fathers."

X.—The Falasha Nuns. (Batiwa.)

These are very rare among the Falashas. I only knew one, and she was so full of Pharisaical pride that she would not condescend to converse

with me on religious matters. The Falashas told me that they lead a solitary life, give themselves up to prayer and fasting, and distribute to the poor and needy the alms they receive. They never enter an ordinary Falasha house, for fear of contamination.

XI.—KAAHEN. (PRIESTS.)

These are found in the villages where there are no monks. They are commissioned by the monks to observe the various ceremonies of religious worship. To qualify them for this office it is necessary that they should be of good repute in a monastic point of view, and that neither they nor their ancestors should have become defiled by eating or drinking with those of another religion, &c. The son or grandson of a man who had eaten bread with Christians would not be eligible for the priest's office. They are extremely proud of this distinction, and seem in fact to bear the words "a Pharisee of the Pharisees" engraven on their foreheads. The priests are all married, but if their wife dies they may not marry again. Besides their religious duties they employ themselves in the instruction of children and in weaving. When a boy has committed to memory the whole Psalter they receive, as a great reward, a thaler, (four shillings.) If they have several boys under instruction their earnings are sometimes considerable.

The priests' duty is to kill cattle for the Falashas, and they receive the neck of the animal as their fee. In a sacrifice they have the breast and shoulder.

The monks do not eat any meat which has been slaughtered by a priest.

XII.—Debtera. (Learned Men.)

The literal translation of this word is "tent" or "tabernacle." The Abyssinians connect the following idea with it; "as God dwelt in the tabernacle, so all learning and wisdom dwells in a Debtera."

They follow no particular calling, but assist the Kaahen in the service of the Mesgeed, in prayer, singing, and in the reading of the law. Many of them have boys under instruction, for which they receive a small payment from the parents.

XIII.—Prophets.

Prophets arise from time to time among the Falashas, professing to have received a revelation from God respecting future events. They go through the land exhorting the people to repentance and faith in the God of their fathers, and are much honoured by the Falashas, from whom they receive large presents. If, however, their prophecies do not come true they are despised as deceivers.

A prophet called Aba Isaias lived in Tankel some twenty-five years ago. The Falashas say that all

his prophecies came true. In the year 1862 another prophet, Aba Sirach, appeared in the neighbourhood of Dshenda, our mission station. He went through all the provinces in which Falashas are to be found, and produced such excitement amongst them that they crowded to hear his prophecies, and vied with each other in overwhelming him with presents. He declared that God had appeared to him in a dream and given him the following message to the Falashas: That as God had brought his people Israel out of Egypt by the hand of Moses, so through Sirach he would deliver their children, the Falashas, out of this country in the course of that year, bring them into the land of Canaan, free them from the Turkish dominion, and bless them above all the people on the face of the earth. That Aba Mahari, the high-priest in Dembea and Saccalt, should strike the Red Sea with his staff, and let the people go over dryshod. That every Falasha should take a load of sand with him from Taccazie, which on reaching the Holy Land would immediately turn into money. "I will send Sanbat before you," continues the prophecy; "she will prepare food and drink for you in abundance; she will open the store-houses of heaven and pour down treasure upon you. (See Jer. xliv. 17.) And from thee, O Sirach, shall come the Messiah who will judge Israel in righteousness, but all the heathen shall be utterly destroy." So much for the prophecy of this boastful deceiver. He however obtained

many followers. Hundreds sold all their possessions and prepared for the journey. A great number forsook western Abyssinia and went with the prophet, Aba Mahari, and other priests, to Tigre, where they settled in Schire. A year later some of them came back to their old home utterly destitute, with the news that the greater part of the pilgrims had died of starvation, fever, or other illness. The false prophet was thus brought into disrepute among the Falashas, and became an object of scorn and contempt. "Woe unto the foolish prophets, that follow their own spirit and have seen nothing! O Israel, thy prophets are like the foxes in the deserts . . . . they have seen vanity and lying divination." God permits false prophets and teachers (Ezek. xiii. 3—6) to appear from time to time, partly to prove His people and strengthen their attachment to the truth, and partly as a judgment on those who have hardened their hearts against it.

XIV.—Sorcery and Witchcraft.

The abominations of the Canaanitish nations, against which Moses warned the children of Israel, (Deut. xviii. 9—12,) are *all* practised in Abyssinia, both by the Falashas and the Christian Debtera. They give one peculiarly the impression of a people given up to their own blind ignorance, to do those things which are not convenient. Three

different species of sorcery have come under my notice as existing among the Falashas:—

1. The Ganien-saabotsch, (spirit raisers.)
2. The Awakotsch, (soothsayers and astrologers.)
3. Beredo na senaam dâgaamǫtsch, (hail and rain conjurors.)

The confession of faith of the two former classes is universally acknowledged to be, "I believe in the devil and deny God." The Abyssinians have a great fear of these people. It is the popular belief that they have dealings with evil spirits, and can make them appear in order to obtain knowledge respecting things unseen, and also medicine for various diseases. If anything is lost, (a slave or cattle, for instance,) the owner goes at once to the Awaki. He pays a thaler (four shillings) or more, and the Awaki then tells him in what place and with whom his property will be found. I have known instances in which slaves had run away three or four days' journey from the residence of their master, and yet the place whither they had escaped was correctly described by the Awaki, so that they were found and brought back. If any one is ill, the Awaki is frequently consulted as to the probability of death or recovery. Both he and the Ganien-saabotsch are resorted to for charms and medicines, and also to foretel future events in life, which they do without reserve. The Ganien-saabotsch and Awakotsch perform their incantations on the banks of a deep lake or river. They possess a book of sorcery called Auda ne-egest. The

late king, Theodorus, on coming to the throne forbade the use of this book under pain of death. This law however has not of late been strictly enforced. The king himself asked the advice of sorcerers.

The high-priest, Aba Mahari, foretold the fate of the provinces Dembea and Dagusa a year before it came to pass. He said that a rebel would arise in Alafa who would call himself king, whereupon king Theodorus would come to Dembea, slay his adversary, and destroy the whole of Dembea and Dagusa, and would banish the inhabitants to other parts of his dominions. Moreover, that great trouble would come upon the Falasha missionaries, that they should be despoiled of all their possessions, but their lives should be spared, all of which was literally fulfilled. This information he professed to have received from God in a dream.

What can one think of these things? For a long time before they came to pass we smiled at them as idle fancies, but subsequent events brought them to our remembrance in a painful and startling manner. It is true that there are many wise heads among the monks who have sufficient penetration to guess at future events from present circumstances, but such minute details of particulars, and that in a land where the government is most arbitrary and despotic, strikes one as something extraordinary.

The hail and rain-conjurors are people who are paid by various towns and villages. The

Abyssinians believe that they have power by their arts to keep off the rain and hail. The hail-conjurors receive a Madega, or measure of grain, as a reward for their services. I had opportunities of observing the utter fallacy of this belief in Dshenda and its neighbourhood, where a Falasha and a Christian Debtera are appointed as rain-men. The hail frequently causes serious mischief in that region. Thus are the minds blinded of those who will not obey the truth.

The produce of our garden was often injured by hail, and our Abyssinian neighbours were on these occasions very zealous in advising us to apply to the rain-man. I did not fail to set before them the folly of such practices. It seemed to them a very strange idea to prefer to receive chastisement from the hand of God rather than endeavour to avert it by means displeasing to Him; and when I tried to convince them, by showing the evident failure of the conjuror in shielding their crops from injury, they replied that it was no fault of the rain-man, but a judgment upon them for their sinfulness.

A rich lady in Dshenda employed the rain-man to secure the house she was having built against storms until its completion. The rain did happen to keep off for an unusual length of time that season, and then gave due warning of its approach by thunder and lightning, so that no damage was done to the building. Of course the people all said this was owing to the conjuror. Several

similar instances might be quoted, and many and various are the evil practices carried on in this benighted land, under the influence of the prince of darkness.

Like other nations throughout the world, they have their set forms of prayer for all circumstances of special need or distress. Those used by the conjurors are couched in the strongest language, and become almost blasphemous when addressed by a sinful creature to the Creator. Thus do these men trade with the superstition of these poor deluded people, and bring them more completely under the power of that spirit that worketh in the children of disobedience. Oh, that they might find grace, according to the words of the apostle, to resist him, "stedfast in the faith," and be turned from darkness to light, from the power of Satan unto God.

XV.—Mesgeed, or Synagogue.

(Literally the Place of Worship.)

In every Falasha village there is a Mesgeed. It is the place of assembly, of worship, and of sacrifice, to the Falasha. When the ground is consecrated on which a Mesgeed is to be built, the following ceremony takes place. After the foundations for the Holy Place and the Holy of Holies are dug out, the high-priest of the province

is sent for. The priests assemble together with the men of the village, and form in procession. One priest leads the way, carrying the Orit, and the rest following. They all walk round the spot appointed for the building, while the women, from a distance, send forth their cry of joy, "Ill-ill-ill-ill," &c. After they have walked once round the ground intended for building they cross it from east to west, and from south to north. The chief priest, together with the other priests, places himself in the spot appointed for the Holy of Holies, and after a short speech to those assembled, consecrates the place. As soon as this is done, masons are employed to lay four unhewn corner-stones for the Holy of Holies, which are blessed by the high-priest. When the building is completed, thank-offerings are brought, and a great festival is held by all the congregation. Every Mesgeed consists of the Kedusa Kedusan, (Holy of Holies,) and the Makdas, or Holy Place. Only the priests enter by the eastern door, and they alone are admitted into the Holy of Holies.

In the Holy of Holies, on the right hand of the door, is a table, on which lies a parchment copy of the Orit, written in the Ethiopian language. On the left hand of the door are hung the holy garments of the priests. In the corner stand two earthen vessels. One containing the ashes of a red heifer, the other the water of consecration. (See Numbers xix.)

In the Holy Place the women have their place on the south side; they may only enter by the southern door. The Debtera stand on the west side, the men and boys on the north. Outside the eastern door of the Mesgeed stands the altar of sacrifice, (Masauwa.) It is built of unhewn stone, five ells square, and one in height. It is surrounded by a strong fence or enclosure, which connects it with the Mesgeed. The sacrifices are killed on the altar on which they are consumed.

XVI.—Divine Service.

The Falasha worship consists of the reciting of various prayers, and the singing of psalms and hymns, accompanied by music and dancing. The prayers and hymns are chiefly extracts from the Old Testament, and are a mixture of Ethiopian and of their own language. The priests generally enter the Mesgeed on Friday evening, after sunset, sleep there, and begin their services at cock-crowing. They are concluded at sunset or thereabouts. On the occasion of a great festival the whole of the Mesgeed is perfumed with incense. The singing is most unedifying, and accompanied, after the custom of Orientals, with a great deal of pantomime. The priests spend much time in preparing for these exhibitions, which are a matter of mere mechanical effect, and calculated to have

a very bad and weakening influence on the minds of the young.

After the conclusion of the ceremonies attending divine worship, bread and pepper-soup, together with sour milk, are brought into the Mesgeed by all who can afford it.

As the Falashas have no fire in their houses from sunset on Friday evening until sunset on Saturday, all their food for the Sabbath is prepared on Friday. The Kaahen blesses the food brought into the Mesgeed, breaks the loaves in two, and takes out a round piece for himself, then helps himself to soup which he eats first of all. The remainder is equally divided between those present, whether rich or poor. This feast is called Makfalt or Jaendshera Maswaöt, (bread-sacrifice.) Beer is afterwards drunk, and as very little moderation is observed, many become intoxicated. The children also quarrel over the cakes, and the respective merits of their mother's home baking—thus one makes the best loaves, and another the thickest bread—and yet, in spite of many shortcomings, this bread-sacrifice makes a favourable impression, for even the poorest receive a full share of the food.

When all are satisfied, if circumstances permit, a portion of the law is read, and the following prayer is offered by the priests and congregation.

Priest.—"Forgive us, for all men are sinners, forgive us."

People.—"O Lord."

Priest.—"Forgive us as often as we offend thee."

People.—"O Lord."

Priest.—"For the sake of thy Holy Word, and of thy Holy Law, forgive us."

People.—"O Lord."

Priest.—"Be gracious unto us, for we serve thee alone. Thou art the one God, and beside thee there is no God. Remember us in mercy, and have compassion upon thy people."

People.—"O Lord."

Priest.—"Bless thy people, who are here before thee to offer thee a willing service. Be gracious unto us, and deliver us from all evil. Bless our fathers and mothers, brothers and sisters, relations, friends, and children. Comfort the sick and the afflicted, provide for the hungry, clothe the naked. Have mercy, Lord, on all people. Keep and defend our property, and bless us as thou hast blessed our fathers."

People.—"O Lord, hear us."

Priest.—"Forgive us, O Lord."

People.—"Forgive us."

Priest.—"We have sinned, and done evil before thee; forgive us, O Lord."

People.—"Forgive us, O Lord."

Priest.—"Thy strength never fails, thy kingdom endures for ever, and thy dominion throughout all generations, yea, from everlasting to everlasting. Amen."

XVII.—Fasts.

The fasts of the Falashas differ from those of the Christians in this, that they taste neither food nor drink until after sunset. They then eat meat, or any sort of food, while the Christians only abstain until three o'clock in the afternoon, but take no *animal* food during the whole of the fast-day. The fasts observed by all the Falashas are as follows:

Every Monday and Thursday in the week.

Every new moon is a fast-day.

The 14th of April, or according to our reckoning, the 21st or 22nd of April, is observed as a strict fast, being the day on which the Passover-lamb is sacrificed.*

These fasts are observed by *all* the Falashas. When children are seven years old they are made to fast.

The monks have also various fasts, which, however, are only observed among themselves.

* The Falashas reckon their time in the same manner as the Abyssinian Christians. Their New Year is on the 10th, in leap-year on the 11th of September. Each month has 30 days, and at the end of the year five days, or six in leap year, are added on and called Pagme. They have only two seasons, Baga, the dry or summer season, and Keremt, the rainy season. The summer lasts nine months, from the middle of September to the middle of June; the rainy season three, from June to September. The Abyssinian calendar, called Abuschaker, reckons four seasons.

XVIII.—Books.

Besides the Old Testament, which includes the Apocrypha, the Falashas have the following books :—

1.—*Kufaale.* Extracts from the Pentateu with notes and comments appended, which t say that God gave to Moses on Mount Sinai.

2.—*Te-e-sa-sa Sanbat.* Sabbath-laws.

3.—*The Book of Enoch.*

4.—*Ardeet.* A little book containing all kn of secrets, professedly revealed by God to twel disciples. This little book is used by the Falash monks as a charm against diseases and evil spirits. The Abyssinian Christians say that it contains words which Christ spoke to His disciples before His ascension.

5.—*Gedala Abraham.* The history of Abraham. This book contains a story about Abraham as a boy destroying the idols of his father, which is also found in a book published some years ago at Leipzig, "Life of Abraham, according to the Jewish traditions," by Dr. B. Beer.

6.—*Gedala Mose.* History of Moses.

7.—*Gedala Adam.* History of Adam.

8.—*Judet.*

9.—*Siena Aihud.* History of the Jews. A translation of Josephus.

10.—*Mazhaf As-ta-serit.* An extract from the Law, the Psalms, and the Prophets.

All these books are written on parchment in

the Ethiopian language. Since 1856 the Amharic Bible has been in the possession of the Falashas, a number of Bibles and Testaments from Bishop Gobat at Jerusalem having been sent at that time to Abyssinia, by the brethren Bender, Meyer, Kienzlen, and myself.

XIX.—Festivals, called Baal.

The Falashas observe two kinds of feasts, those on which no work whatever is done, and those on which certain household duties are permitted. The weekly Sabbath, Kedamie Sanbat, belongs to the former class, also the first and seventh day of the Passover-feast, and the Feast of Tabernacles, and the As-ta-serit, or Feast of Atonement. The other monthly and yearly feasts belong to the latter class.

I. The weekly feast, on the Sabbath, is very strictly observed. No fire is made, no light kindled, no food prepared, no water drawn. The monks consider it a sin to converse with anyone on Saturday. No brook or river may be crossed. The cattle are left to the care of Christians on the Sabbath; the Falashas do not even make use of the milk on that day, but usually give it to the Christians as a reward for their services.

II. The Falashas celebrate monthly feasts:—

1. At the new moon. 2. On the tenth day after the new moon. 3. On the fifteenth day after the new

moon. On the eighteenth day after the new moon they celebrate the feast of Arv Asert. This was a saint of whom the most wonderful stories are related. The feast of Kedus Michael (the Archangel Michael) they observe, like the Abyssinian Christians, on the twelfth day of each month. The Falashas consider the Archangel Michael their special patron. (See Dan. x. 21.)

III. Their annual feasts are as follows:—

1. *Fasika*—Passover-feast. This is observed on the fifteenth day after the new moon in April. On the 11th, 12th, and 13th of April, the Falashas eat nothing but raw Shimbera, or roasted barley. From sunset on the 13th until sunset on the 14th, nothing whatever is eaten, and during the whole of Easter Kita is the only food allowed. Kita is made of Shimbera and corn flour, and is prepared with an extra quantity of salt, so that it is impossible to eat much of it. On the 14th, after sunset, the Passover-lamb is slain by each congregation, in the Mesgeed, and Ex. xii. 1—11 is strictly observed.

On the 13th and 14th of April the houses are purified; all the furniture is carried out of them. All wooden, leathern, and iron utensils, together with articles of clothing, are carefully washed in the river. The whole house is cleaned and washed, and earthen vessels are either sold to the Christians or fired over again.

2.—*Ma-e-rer*, or Harvest-feast. This is celebrated fifty days after the Feast of the Passover.

3. *As-ta-serit*—the Feast of Atonement. This

is observed on the tenth day after the new moon in the month of September. The command given by God in Leviticus xxiii. 29, they observe by fastings, prayers, penances, and repeated genuflexions, until they fall down giddy and exhausted.

4. *Baala mazálet*—Feast of Tabernacles. This is on the fifteenth day after the new moon in September. For seven days nothing leavened is eaten in the Mesgeed, but only unleavened corn cakes. They do not build any booths or tabernacles.

5. *Amata Sauw*—the Assembly of the People, the Day of Covenant. This takes place at the new moon in November. On this day the Falashas assemble on some mountain, when prayer is first made, then a portion of the law is read and explained, after which all present bring offerings and gifts of corn, salt, provisions, clothes, money, &c. Some of the corn is strewn on the rocks for the birds, all the other things are divided amongst the monks. A burnt-sacrifice is offered on this day in every Mesgeed of any importance. After the solemnities are over, the monks withdraw into the wilderness, where they spend seven days in prayer, living only on Shimbera and water.

6. *Taskar Abraham*—Abraham's day. This falls in July, on the eleventh day after the new moon. Bread and beer are offered in honour of Abraham; that is to say, the richer portion of the community bring bread and beer into the Mesgeed, when it is shared by the whole congregation.

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The following portions of the Old Testament are read to the people on the various feast-days.

At the Passover. Exod. xii., xiii.; Numbers ix.

At the Feast of Harvest. Levit. xxiii.; Ps. l., xlviii., xxxii.

On the Day of Atonement, the book *Mazhaf As-ta-serit*, an extract from the Law, the Psalms, and the Prophets, referring to Atonement.

At the Feast of Tabernacles. Levit. xxiii., xxiv.; Psalms lxxxix to xci.;

On the Day of Assembly. Deut. xxviii., xxix., xxx., xxxi., xxxii.

XX.—The Sacrifices. (Maswaöt.)

A remarkable feature among the Falashas is their sacrifices. The feeling of sinfulness which is common to all men, and the consciousness that atonement is necessary, and that blood must be shed to reconcile God and man, has led the Falashas to perpetuate some of the sacrifices which God commanded in the law of Moses. They do not trouble their consciences as to the place in which the Lord commanded all sacrifices to be made, and offerings to be presented. They affirm that as the Temple is destroyed they are like the children of Israel in the wilderness, and, wherever they dwell, may hallow a place to the Lord, whither they may bring their offering. They adhere very positively to this statement, as well as

to various other customs and doctrines for which they have no ground in Holy Scripture.

The sacrifices which they still observe are as follows:—

A.—*Biblical.*

1. Ya-endschera Maswaöt, (bread or meat-offering.) Every Saturday. (See "Divine Worship.")

2. Ya-tscherka Bal Maswaöt, (new moon offering.) This consists of a young heifer without blemish.

3. Yamikatel Maswaöt. (burnt-offering, sin-offering, offering for purification, &c.) These consist of a kid without blemish. (See Levit. iii. 3—8.)

4. Ya Fasika Bag, (Passover-lamb.) As the Falashas do not know what are the bitter salts and herbs with which the lamb is to be eaten, they fast the whole of the day on which it is slain.

5. Ya-shet Maswaöt, (Sacrifice of the Feast of Harvest.)

6. Begata Maswaöt. As a thank-offering for mercies received, or for deliverance from danger, a heifer is sacrificed, which is brought with bread and beer into the Mesgeed, and divided amongst the congregation. The flesh is partly boiled and partly roasted. The ceremonies enjoined by Moses at every sacrifice are strictly observed. The blood of every beast slain in sacrifice is poured into a dish and burnt.

7. The heave-offering, (Ya-mesgaana Maswaöt,)

yet remains to be mentioned. In times of trouble, famine, war, and pestilence, the Falashas often make vows to God if He will deliver them out of their distress. Wives who are childless also frequently make such a vow, as a numerous family among the Christians and Falashas is looked upon as a special blessing from God. The vow may consist of an ox, a cow, a sheep, or a goat, which, after the blessing is received, is brought to the priest to be sacrificed. The vow may however be paid by a present to the Mesgeed, the monks, or even to the poor.

B.—*Non-Biblical Sacrifices.*

1. Offerings for the Sick. A white hen or a sheep. This is only offered when it is believed that the sickness is caused by an evil spirit, (Saar.) The Abyssinian Christians have a similar offering.

2. Offering in time of drought. A white cow is led round the parched ground, and slaughtered in the open air. The flesh is eaten, and all that remains is burnt. The Christians have a similar custom.

3. Sacrifice of the Barns. A white hen is offered by Falashas and Christians.

4. Sacrifices in a newly-built house.

5. The offering for the dead, or Taskar. For particulars of this, see "Death and Burial."

XXI.—Laws of Purification.

The priests strictly enforce the observance of these laws, which are very severe and oppressive, especially as regards the female sex.

All the ceremonies and restrictions found in Levit. xii. and following chapters, as also in Num. xix., are closely observed. As so much washing is continually required, their villages are always built near a stream of running water. In or near the river a pool is constructed, through which the water flows, and to which the people resort for purification. Any Falasha who has become unclean by contact with a person of a different faith or some forbidden object, may neither taste food or enter his house during the day, until he has bathed after sunset. This is done as follows: he lays aside his clothing, and raising his hands towards heaven, dips himself from three to seven times under the water, so that his whole body is immersed. This is done in every season, during every variety of temperature; they believe that it not only purifies their bodies, but also cleanses their souls from sin.

A woman is put apart for forty days after the birth of a son, and eighty days after the birth of a daughter. When the days of her purification are accomplished, she washes all her clothing, though the poorer only do this themselves; after sunset she bathes, and is sprinkled with holy water by the priest, after which, if she have offered the

accustomed offerings, she is permitted to re-enter her house, and to come again into the congregation.

An unmarried woman who has sinned is brought before the priest, (a monk,) from whom she receives an exhortation and reproof. After she has confessed her sin, a fire is kindled in the sight of the whole congregation. The penitent must herself fetch the wood for this fire, bringing a burden of wood every day for eight days, and piling it up in the neighbourhood of the Mesgeed. She must then, her body being protected only by a slight covering, spring into the midst of the flame when the fire is at its height. Care is taken, nevertheless, that she should not be materially injured; she is drawn out of the fire as quickly as possible, but even then the consequences sometimes last for months and years. After she has recovered from the burns, she brings a kid as a sin-offering, bathes herself in water, and is sprinkled by the priest, after which she is again received into the congregation.

If a man has sinned and is excommunicated he must, in order to be again received, fast for seven days, his only food being raw Shimbera (peas) and water. After the fast is ended he brings two goats to the priest, as a sin-offering. The priest receives the goats and sends the penitent to cut seven rods, which he brings to the priest. The man then removes his upper garment and falls at the feet of the priest. A lay person, who is appointed, then strikes the penitent with each of

the seven rods, throwing them away as he does so, and dealing the seventh blow with all his force. After this penance the goats are offered as a sin-offering. The priest lays his right hand on the penitent and his left hand on the offering, and absolves the man from his sin. He must then bathe himself, and be sprinkled with holy water by the priest, after which he may enter the congregation and take part in the services. Heinous sin is sometimes punished by scourging. The criminal is laid on his face on the ground, his hands and feet bound with long leather straps, and is held by four men, while two others, armed with a long ox-whip, administer the chastisement. Each gives him twenty stripes, so that he receives forty in all. (See Deut. xxv. 3.) He must afterwards bring a sin-offering, bathe himself, and be sprinkled with holy water by the priest. It is often two or three months before the wounds heal after such a punishment. If a Falasha has defiled himself by eating bread or drinking water with those who are not Falashas, (meat is never eaten with Christians or Mahommedans,) he must fast seven days on raw Shimbera and water. A large goblet of Musanna (a strong medicine) is then administered, a sin-offering brought, and two to ten thalers paid to the priest. The man must also undergo the punishment of the seven rods mentioned above, before he can be again received into the congregation.

Those who perform the last offices for the dead,

are considered unclean, and put apart for seven days. On the seventh day they bathe and are sprinkled with holy water. They may then re-enter their dwellings.

The Falashas are strictly forbidden to smoke tobacco, and those who take snuff are forbidden to enter the Mesgeed.

It should here be noticed that although the monks affirm that they are forbidden to impose a fine in lieu of personal chastisement, it is well known that the rich often obtain absolution by a gift of money, clothes, or cattle.

Oh, that this dispersed and scattered people might be led into the right way, and turning from their sins and wickedness, might hear the voice of Him who can speak a word in season to the weary, that so their toil and labour might not be spent in vain.

XXII.—Betrothals, Weddings, Marriage, and Divorce.

The laws which relate to marriage among the Falashas are extremely simple. Marriages are quickly concluded, and unfortunately as quickly dissolved when the parties are discontented with their lot.

As in other parts of the East, girls are married very young, generally between the ages of nine and

fifteen. Young men marry at from sixteen to twenty years of age. The preferences of the young people are not consulted, but their parents arrange the match as they consider suitable with regard to property, position, &c.

I must here premise that the Abyssinians are very proud of their manners, and it cannot be denied that they have very strict rules of ceremony and etiquette. Some of these, however, are strangely at variance with our European ideas of propriety. For instance, if a great man should happen to cough or sneeze, one of his attendants, of whom there are generally plenty, must immediately respectfully offer his garment in place of a pocket-handkerchief, which the Abyssinians consider quite a superfluous appendage.

They greatly love to show off their code of etiquette, and consider our European customs extremely tame and uninteresting, regarding us in fact as beings of an inferior order, or as some amphibious kind of animals.

An Abyssinian betrothal, which differs very little amongst Falashas and Christians, has therefore many points about it which to us appear somewhat absurd. After the parents on both sides have come to an understanding about property and settlements, a day is appointed on which the marriage-contract is concluded before some of the elders of the congregation. The bride's father, with his male relatives, then goes to some place appointed, generally under a shady

tree, where he awaits the father of the bridegroom, who comes with his attendants. They remain at a little distance, and the bride's father sends two messengers to greet them. They return the greeting through two ambassadors. After they have conveyed the message, the bride's father takes counsel with his party about the marriage portion which he intends to give his daughter. When the council is over, a second embassage is sent, with the question, "Why have you come hither?" An answer is sent to this effect. "We have a young man for whom we seek a wife; will you not give us your daughter?" At this reply the other party are sent for, they gird themselves and go up to the bride's relations, bowing themselves towards the ground on their approach. The bride's relations then say, "What do you give your son?"

The property is then settled; the bride's father gives his daughter a marriage-portion according to the wealth of his future son-in-law—he seldom gives more than the bridegroom possesses. Everything is then considered, down to the smallest article in the bride's possession, and when the traffic is at last concluded, for it is as much a business transaction as the selling of cattle in the market, each father has to give two securities that he will keep his agreement, and to take an oath that on certain conditions he will give his son or his daughter in marriage, as the case may be. The wedding-day is then appointed.

On the morning of the wedding the invited guests assemble at the house of the bridegroom. After some beer has been drunk, the men and youths accompany the bridegroom to the house of the bride, generally mounted on mules, which are hired for the purpose. They are received by the bride's friends with a cry of joy, "Ill-ill-ill-ill," and after a feast has been made, the father of the bride gives her to the bridegroom with many benedictions and good wishes. The bride then takes leave of her mother, who, with all present, wishes her every happiness and blessing. She is next veiled and carried by a man out of the house, placed on a mule, and the whole procession, with loud cries of joy, sets off for the Mesgeed. At the Mesgeed the young couple receive an exhortation from the priest and a solemn blessing, after which they are conducted in state, and with joyful acclamations, to the house of the bridegroom, where a feast is made, drums beaten, and the women and girls sing and dance. The festivities last from three to seven days.

The Abyssinian dance consists of a regular movement of the whole body, accompanied by clapping of hands and beating of drums. When the bride and bridegroom are both the first-born of their parents, they have to pay a certain sum to the priest, which is called by the monks, Ya Egsiabher Fanta, (God's portion.) This is sometimes paid in salt, which is the small coin of Abyssinia. Twenty or thirty pieces of salt are in

Gondar worth one thaler, and two thalers' worth is an ass's burden.

The wife never addresses her husband with "thou," but always in the third person. As a sign of subjection she often washes his feet. As mentioned before, they often during meals put food in each other's mouths, in token of affection.

They are very strict in the education of their children. Any ill-behaviour is visited with severe chastisement. They rightly consider that diligent and well-disciplined children are the greatest earthly blessing. The father takes the oversight of the boys, instructing them in all kinds of field and house-work; the mother does the same by the girls, early teaching them to spin, grind, prepare corn, and collect wood. The children are particularly taught to observe the Sabbath, and any play or frolic on that day is severely punished by the parents.

The Falashas have but one wife. Divorce is permitted. It must be done by the judge, who receives the tenth part of all the possessions of the parties in question. Very often, however, a reconciliation takes place before matters proceed so far. This is done by the chief man or elder of the village, who hears the complaints of both parties, and appoints a fine to be paid by the one in fault. If a divorce is obtained, each party takes their own marriage portion; the rest of the property is then divided, and also the children. If the eldest child be a boy, he belongs to the

mother, if it be a girl, to the father. If there be only one child under seven years of age, it falls to the mother's share. They share the costs of the legal proceedings, and as soon as the divorce is accomplished, each is at liberty to marry again. When they have no children of their own, people often adopt an orphan, or a child out of some large family, and make it their heir. Orphans are always provided for and brought up by their nearest relatives. When they are grown up they receive a marriage portion like the other children of the family.

When husband or wife are unfaithful (I have only known cases of the former) a divorce can be procured. In most cases the husband endeavours to effect a reconciliation by payment of fine to his wife—this is called a Kasa. If, however, the wife persists in obtaining a divorce, the man must pay damages and all the expenses of the law-suit.

The father is required by the laws of Abyssinia to support his wife and children.

XXIII.—Death and Burial.

When a person is near death he sends for his father-confessor and makes confession of his sins. Every Falasha has a father-confessor, who is always a monk. If he dies, a sin-offering, appointed by the confessor, is offered for him the

third day after death. If he recovers he must himself bring a sin-offering to the Lord. Immediately after death the corpse is washed, and wound in a cotton cloth, and carried out of the house. The nearest relations, neighbours, and friends then assemble to weep and lament for the departed. Near relatives throw dust on their heads, cut themselves with stones till the blood flows, and also shave their heads. A lament is kept by the mourning-women and friends of the deceased, and all his good deeds are recounted. At every fresh arrival the cry is renewed; in fact, it is often carried on in so violent a manner that the mourners become quite hoarse with screaming, and after a few hours can scarcely speak above a whisper. Every visitor parts from the mourning family with the words, "God comfort you," to which the reply is given, "May you never know the third part of our sorrow." When the monks arrive, psalms and prayers for the dead are read, which they call Fethat, absolution. This Fethat is afterwards read seven days in the Mesgeed, for the soul of the departed, and the priests are well paid for it. After the Fethat the funeral procession sets out. The corpse is carried forth, followed by the priests, with a large canopy called Debaab, repeating prayers for the dead. The men follow, and then the women. They rest seven times between the house of death and the burial-place, which is at some distance from the village. Psalms are read at these intervals,

and also at the grave. The Falashas do not bury their dead in coffins, but make a kind of vault in the grave, with unhewn stones, to keep the earth from touching the body. It is their custom to plant a shrub, a species of euphorbia, upon the grave.

They never allow a corpse to remain in the house longer than is needful. If a person dies in the evening, a bier is made of stones in the centre of the house, on which the body is laid for the night, and at break of day it is carried out for burial.

For seven days a lament, called Lekso, takes place every morning at the house of the deceased During this time no kind of food is prepared in it. The friends and relations of the bereaved family bring them the necessaries of life, and eat with them. If a priest or monk dies he is buried by those of his own order.

The Falashas believe that so soon as the soul leaves the body it departs into a place of darkness until the first Taskar. The first Taskar takes place on the third day, and the second on the seventh day. After this is fulfilled they believe that it goes to Abraham, and lives in fellowship with him and with the souls of the faithful. The Taskar is simply an offering for the dead. For all deceased persons an offering is brought on the third and seventh day, and on the first anniversary of their death. It consists of several bullocks; sometimes as many as ten. The flesh is partly boiled, partly roasted, then eaten by those present; the blood,

skin, bones, fat, &c., are burned, as in other sacrifices. This is called Taskar.

The night before each Taskar is spent by the priests and friends of the deceased in the Mesgeed, in prayers and intercessions for the repose of his soul.

As to the origin of the Taskar the monks give the following account of it. They say that it dates from the time of Moses, and that when he led the children of Israel out of Egypt, they carried with them the bones of the twelve sons of Jacob. On investigation it was found that the bones of Reuben had become black. Moses was grieved at this, and prayed to God, who appeared to him and commanded him to make a Taskar for Reuben. Moses obeyed the command, and Reuben's bones then became white, like those of his brethren. The monks on such days tell the people many similar absurdities, in order to justify the Taskar. They also relate a story of a man who died, and after his death, as the good angels were carrying his soul to the eternal world, the devil came and endeavoured to obtain possession of it. Neither party would yield, until at length God decreed that the man's soul should remain in Hades until his child, who was then still unborn, should grow up and make a Taskar for his father. When he did so the soul should be allowed to enter heaven, if he omitted it, it should be condemned to eternal punishment.

Only monks may eat of the Taskar for a

monk, because only Aaron and his sons were permitted to eat of the holy sacrifice.

If any one dies before he has confessed, no Fethat is said for him, although several Taskars may be offered for his soul.

The expense of the Taskar is so great that the survivors often spend all their property, and sometimes even have to borrow, in order to make a good Taskar. If any one dies having eaten Christian bread, or otherwise defiled himself, the relations, and those who bury him, must fast seven days on raw Shimbera and water.

A grand Taskar was lately made in Gaffat for the wife of the Kantiba Hailu, at which a hundred cows were slaughtered and eaten. Many thousand loaves, and quantities of beer and wine were also distributed, and people came several days' journey to attend. Lepers and sick people of all kinds take advantage of such opportunities. Whoever participates in the Taskar feast is supposed to bear his share in the sins of the departed. How painful it is to enter such a scene, and how improperly the priests conduct themselves, it is impossible to describe. I have known priests, monks, and Debtera who would not partake of the Taskar, considering it sinful. The words of our Lord, in St. Matt. xxiii. 13, 14, apply in this day, not only to the Falashas but also specially to the Christians in Abyssinia.

Their mode of conveying intelligence of a death to friends at a distance is peculiar. Such a

message is never sent in writing, but always through a messenger. When he comes into the house where he is to announce the tidings of death, he sits down quietly and takes part in the conversation without betraying in any way that he has news of importance to deliver, and evading the questions of the family should their suspicions be aroused. The next morning, however, long before sunrise, the message is given in the following manner. The messenger of death goeth to the house where the person sleeps who is most nearly concerned in the intelligence, calls him by name, and says, "Rise and gird thyself." These words are like the black seal on a letter to the person addressed. He rises hastily, and immediately begins to lament; while, as he receives the news from the messenger, friends, neighbours, and acquaintances join in the wailing, which waxes louder and louder, and often lasts for some hours. In fact, if we judge the Abyssinians by their funeral ceremonies and laments, it would appear as if no nation in the world so literally fulfilled the injunction of the apostle, to "weep with them that weep." We might often wonder whence come all the flood of tears which they indulge in on such occasions. But we may notice that however impulsive and violent they be in giving vent to their feelings, they are also equally superficial. It seems as if the heart exhausted all its grief in the loud weeping and wailing. Both Christians and Falashas carry out by their conduct the words of the son of Sirach, (Eccles. xxxviii. 16—20.)

It is very sad to observe in all their troubles how completely destitute both the Falashas and Abyssinian Christians are of any true comfort, such as may be derived from the Word of God. It is true that Psalms are often repeated, but they are gabbled over in the Ethiopian tongue, and no one understands them except the monks, priests, and Debtera. Their pitiable darkness and ignorance can but move us to utter the fervent petition, "Open Thou their eyes that they may behold wondrous things out of Thy law." May the time soon come when "with joy they shall draw water out of the wells of salvation."

CONCLUDING REMARKS.

In the foregoing statement I have endeavoured, as faithfully as possible, to give a short description of the Falashas, their domestic and public life, their commerce, &c. Details of the mission work amongst them are given in my little work, "Twelve Years in Abyssinia."

It cannot fail to strike the reader how utterly the religion of the Falashas has fallen away and become corrupted from the old faith of their fathers. But this will not appear so extraordinary when we consider for how many centuries they have been cut off from all intercourse with their Jewish brethren, and brought under the influence of a

people whose Christianity abounds in superstitious fables and traditions, and who bear very few traces of Christian teaching to distinguish them from their heathen neighbours.

Under these circumstances it was natural that the Falashas should acquire much of a foreign element in their faith, manners, and customs. One cannot look back without much sorrow on a mission, which, at the time of its enforced withdrawal, seemed to promise a rich harvest of blessing. One dark feature in its removal was subsequently developed in the proselytes being compelled, by command of the king and the abuna, to join the Abyssinian Church. It cannot be denied that, in a moral point of view, the Abyssinian Christians are below the Falashas.

As has been already remarked, the monks and priests are the most inaccessible to missionary work. Among the laity we have always found willing hearers. When we entered a village, men, women, and children came together immediately, and listened attentively, often eagerly, and with emotion, to the words of life. They gladly sent their children to the mission school, in spite of continual opposition on the part of the monks.

The laity among the Falashas, when the mission was commenced, were quite unacquainted with the Old Testament, except such portions as they heard read by the priests, about sacrifices, purifying, tithes, &c.; they showed, therefore, the most childlike delight over the histories of the patriarchs and the

promises given to their fathers. It often happened that one of these obedient disciples of the monks would enquire what was said concerning the Messiah, the Saviour of the world, in the Old Testament, and as one glorious promise after another was unfolded to him, would exclaim in astonishment, "and our monks have been silent about all these things!"

With regard to those proselytes who came out and openly professed their faith in Christ, it was the Protestant element in that faith that caused such discussion among Falashas and Abyssinian Christians. They belonged nominally to the Abyssinian Church, while they withstood the abuna and the priests touching some of their chief doctrines, and held fast to the scriptural doctrine of justification by faith, rejecting as idolatry the worship of pictures, crucifixes, &c. This drew upon them the hatred of the abuna and the priests, who had influence with the king, and this combined with political circumstances to put an end to the mission.

Fifty-six persons were brought by means of our mission to an open profession of Christianity, and several more were baptized by the Scotch missionaries.

We cannot as yet trace the reason of God's dealings, in thus permitting His work to be overthrown, but we know that it is in His hands, that present defeat shall only ensure a greater ultimate victory. The Lord will not leave His

word unfulfilled—"In a little wrath I hid my face from thee for a moment; but with everlasting kindness will I have mercy on thee." May it please Him soon to bring about the religious liberty so earnestly desired, that our proselytes may no longer be compelled to enter a corrupt Church, but may worship Him in spirit and in truth. May He speedily pour out upon His scattered people the spirit of grace and of supplication: then shall be fulfilled the words of the prophet Zephaniah—"from beyond the rivers of Ethiopia, my suppliants, even the daughter of my dispersed, shall bring mine offering."

REMARKS ON PART I.

I may here append an extract from the genealogy of the kings of Ethiopia, found in an Ethiopian book, by Herr T. Mayer, to whom I am indebted for it. The first line of descent is from Adam down to Jacob and his sons, it is then continued from Judah to Solomon; and the genealogy is also given from Levi to Aaron the high-priest, and again, from him down to Azarias the son of Zadok, who was high-priest in the days of David and Solomon. The following history is then inserted:—Solomon begat Ebena Hakim, that is Menilek. Solomon made his son,

Ebena Hakim, king of Ethiopia, and sent him from Jerusalem, that he might reign over all the countries included therein. He sent with him Azarias, the son of Zadok, as priest. They left Jerusalem for Ethiopia, taking with him the law, the tablet, and other priestly vessels. When they came to Ethiopia they lived in Axum. After some time Azarias married the daughter of a prince, of the children of Madabai, by whom he had two sons. The one he called Zadok, after the name of his father, the other was named Egsia Makar. Here follows a list of forty generations of the family of Azarias, closing with these words:—"These priests instructed all the people of Ethiopia in the law of Moses, and performed Divine worship according to the Jewish ritual."

Without giving further details of the history of Ethiopia, the writer continues: "At the time that Tiberius reigned in Rome, and Herod was king of Judea, and Basien king of Ethiopia, and Akin the priest, was Jesus Christ born in Bethlehem, of the blessed Virgin Mary. When Anbûram was priest, and Asgnage king of Ethiopia, came Aba Salama whose former name was Frumentius. His history is as follows:—

"Two hundred and fifty-seven years after our Lord's ascension, a merchant with two sons came from Jerusalem. The name of the one was Frumentius, the name of the other Sidrakos, or Edesius. They dwelt with the priest Anbaram, in

Axum. The merchant died shortly after his arrival, and the two youths remained in the priest's house. One day Frumentius said to the priest, 'Sir, I wonder at the state of the people of Ethiopia. They have the rite of circumcision and believe in Christ, but they have not Baptism, or the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper.' Whereupon the priest replied, 'Our fathers, the children of Levi, brought the rite of circumcision hither, and the eunuch of Queen Candace taught us to believe in Christ; but we have neither Baptism nor the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper, because no apostle has been sent to us. Go thou, therefore, and receive consecration from the patriarch, and then come and be our apostle.' Frumentius consented, and having received from Anbaram what was needful for his journey, he went to Jerusalem, where he found Athanasius, who, on hearing his story, consecrated him Bishop of Ethiopia, and gave him the name of Salama. He returned to Ethiopia, A.D. 315, during the reign of the kings Aberha and Atsbeha.

"On his arrival in Ethiopia he baptized the priest Anbaram and ordained him to an episcopate, giving him the name Hesba Kâdes, (hallow the people,) and bidding him baptize all people.

"Before Aba Salama came to Ethiopia, part of the Ethiopians were Jews and Jewish proselytes, and part were heathen or worshippers of the serpent.

"During the reigns of the good kings, Aberha

and Atsbeha, Christianity was spread throughout the whole of Ethiopia, through the exertions of Hesba Kâdes. Thousands of people were baptized, and the people of Noba (probably Nubia) and of Guder also received baptism."

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